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AUTHOR Modiano, Nancy
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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to summarize the state of the field of educational anthropology, as it relates to studies of educational institutions and processes. Major research done by anthropologists in three areas--school ethnographies, school-community contacts with ethnic minorities, and cognitive and linguistic development--is reviewed. Topics covered are: anthropological studies of schools in Germany, Japan, Mexico, and the Phillippines, school-community work with American Indians and urban blacks, linguistic studies of urban black speech styles, bilingual education projects (Spanish, Cherokee, Chinese, Japanese, French, and Portugese languages), literacy teaching done with Brazilian subjects, the relationship between language and cognition, intellectual development of blacks and children from non-industrialized societies, and learning styles among American Indian children. An annotated bibliography is appended. (KG)

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EDUCATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY: An Overview

Nancy Modiano
Education Study Center

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The point of departure for this paper is Wolcott's review of educational anthropology, published in the 1967 Review of Educational Research. Since then the most significant event has been organizational. The Council on Anthropology and Education, composed primarily of professional anthropologists interested in education as a formal institution, was formed last year. Major areas of interest emerging through the Council include research on the ethnography of schools; contacts between schools and community, especially as they relate to ethnic minorities; cognitive and linguistic studies and their applications to pupil personnel services and curriculum development; and the teaching of anthropology. The Council has welcomed the participation of interested non-anthropologists.

This paper is going to be limited to a review of major studies in the first three areas: school ethnographies, school-community contacts, and cognitive and linguistic studies; it will omit research in the teaching of anthropology.

School Ethnographies

Schools as micro-societies have been studied

both in themselves and in their interactions with ethnic minorities. Burnett has applied event and network analyses to a study of early childhood classrooms (1968, 1969); she has also taken a broader view of high school culture (in press). Jackson (1968) has used ethnographic techniques to show the complexity of teacher-student interactions, and to question the adequacy of some of the most popular models of educational evaluation: learning theory, human engineering, and clinical psychology. Smith's ethnography of an elementary classroom (1968) led him to select decision making theory as the best tool for the analysis of teachers' classroom behavior. Wolcott has found ethnographic techniques valid for studying a principalship (1969).

Schooling has also been studied anthropologically in other countries. Among industrially developed nations, there have been studies of formal education in Germany (Spindler 1969, Warren 1967) and Japan (Brameld 1968, Keifer 1970). Among industrially developing countries schooling has been studied anthropologically in Mexico (Maccoby and Modiano in press; Modiano 1966, 1968) and the Philippines (Jocano 1969).

School-Community Contacts

Contacts between schools and ethnic minorities have been of prime concern to anthropologists both in the United States and Canada. Singleton (1969) has urged cross-cultural study of the problem in order to gain more valid perspectives. Since Wolcott's 1967 review, major studies of Indian schooling have been undertaken by King (1969), who examined a Canadian boarding school; Parmee (1968), who worked with Apaches; Sindell and his associates (1968, Wintrob and Sindell 1968), who have concerned themselves primarily with the Cree; and Wax and his associates (1969, Petit and Wax 1969), who have worked with both the Cherokee and the Sioux. All of the Indian studies point to the chasm between Indian life ways and the values and techniques of schoolmen. Mention should also be made, although no major studies are yet available, of the Rough Rock School, where full control in the hands of the local Navajo community has probably taken this school furthest along the road to bridging--but not integrating--the two cultures.

Blacks, especially urban blacks, are the other major group here to have received considerable atten-

tion from anthropologists. All operate under the assumptions spelled out by the Baratz's (1970) that lower-class blacks are neither deprived of culture nor primarily pathological; rather, they are members of a distinct ethnic group with a viable culture of its own, a culture which often differs dramatically from that of the dominant (and school) society. Eddy (1967), Fuchs (1969), Leacock (1969), Moore (1967), Rosenfeld (1969), and Talbert (1969) have all examined aspects of the interactions between blacks and educators, and all have pointed out the gulfs between the two. While Abraham's study of black urban folklore (1970) is not directly related to schooling, it is perhaps the most clear and least sentimental of all the studies, and best points up the differences in values and life styles between the black and the dominant societies.

Cognitive and Linguistic Studies

Since Wolcott treated cognitive and linguistic studies related to education less extensively than the ethnographic ones, I shall deal with them in greater detail and reach further back in time.

Anthropological linguists have concerned them-

selves with language maintenance and the speech styles of various ethnic groups, especially blacks. Fishman (1967, 1969) has examined language maintenance throughout the United States. Gumperz (1969) has looked at code and language switching among bilinguals, and has shown that it is not the random, haphazard thing generally supposed. Bailey (1969), Dillard (1967, 1968), Kochman (1969), Labov (1969a, 1969b), Tucker and Lambert (1969), Stewart (1965, 1969a, 1969b), and Wolfram (1969) have all studied aspects of Black English and have found it to be a highly viable dialect, as structured and ordered as any, and one which is often used with considerable elegance and verve by its speakers. The only educational application of these findings is a project examining dialect interference in beginning reading, now under way in Washington, D. C. (Baratz and others, 1969).

Although anthropologists have often been concerned with the fate of linguistic minorities within the United States and Canada, they have seldom been involved with the bilingual programs now springing up. Within the past few months the U. S. Office of Education funded 65 bilingual projects under Title

VII, ESEA, supplementing others already under way. Ninety per cent of the O. E. projects were Spanish-English, while others involved the use of Navajo and Cherokee, Chinese and Japanese, French and Portuguese. Most of the projects, whether O. E. funded or not, have been developed from a state of tabula rasa by school authorities. However, there is some recognition, at least in the Office of Education if not among the schoolmen themselves, of the need for basic research in second language learning and all the factors affecting it--including the dialects actually spoken by children.

Somewhat related to bilingual education has been the whole area of literacy teaching. The phonetic approach has again been reevaluated. (Smalley 1964). A new approach to literacy teaching has been proposed by the Brazilian Paolo Freire (1967), who has worked with peasant and slum-dwelling adults. He stresses that the reading act must be intrinsically meaningful and freeing to the individual for it to have any worth. To this end he designs a series of picture and one word charts for the beginning stages, seeking for themes those closest to the needs and problems of the

learners, who are encouraged through group discussion to see themselves not as the helpless victims of fate, society, the landlord (or whitey), but rather as active beings capable of changing their lives. His methods, which then use a phonetic approach, have proven highly effective.

There has also been much concern with the relationship between language and cognition; the Whorfian hypothesis is constantly being revisited! Many articles have pointed out relationships between culture (including language) and thought, but few have analyzed the dynamics underlying culturally influenced differences in perception and thought patterns.

Jensen's much publicized article of last year (1969) is a case in point. Like most cross-cultural cognitive studies, Jensen's shows little evidence of anthropological sophistication; this is not so surprising when we remember that these studies have rarely been undertaken by anthropologists. Major exceptions have been the work of Levi-Strauss (1966), Cohen (1969), and Segall, Campbell, and Herskovitz (1966). Levi-Strauss has engaged in structural analyses, Cohen has contrasted reasoning styles with the types of groups

in which children grow up, while Segall and his associates have related visual perception to the physical environment. In our own work Michael Maccoby and I have looked more at the economic and personality determinants of cognitive style (1966, 1969a, 1969b; Modiano and Maccoby 1968).

The intellectual development of children from non-industrialized cultures has been studied only recently. Important studies have been undertaken in Algeria (Bovet 1968) and among Yemenite immigrants in Israel (Feuerstein 1968); Senegal (Greenfield 1966) and Liberia (Gay and Cole 1967; Glick 1968, 1969); Mexico (Greenfield in progress; Maccoby and Modiano 1966, 1969a, 1969b; Modiano and Maccoby 1968); and closer to home, among the Sioux (Voyat 1970) and Eskimo (Greenfield and others 1966). All of these studies have clearly shown culturally determined variations in cognitive style. Most have been conducted by psychologists rather than anthropologists, but with a more sympathetic point of view than has been common among the multitudinous studies of Negro children which ignore the cultural differences. An important exception is Palmer's IQ study, which gave careful at-

tention to the cultural differences affecting the testing situation (Whitten and Kagan 1969).

While some of the cross-cultural cognitive studies have sought linguistic determinants for cognitive style, more have adhered to the viewpoint that when man really needs a term he will invent it, and therefore a lack of terms need not preclude certain styles of thinking. This latter viewpoint, which contrasts sharply to the theories of Bereiter (Bereiter and Engelman 1966), Bernstein (1964), and their followers, is first beginning to make itself heard (for example, see Dillard 1969; Modiano 1969), but has yet to be systematically examined.

A major problem in cognitive studies has been the lack of communication between anthropologists and psychologists. Not only do they lack common points of view and methodology, which is all to the good, but they also lack a common terminology and thus have difficulty in understanding one another. I believe that both groups would gain immeasurably if communications were improved.

An area, however, in which anthropologists and psychologists have begun to find common ground and a

ready audience among educators, has been in the study of learning styles, especially among American Indians. However, few of these studies have taken into account both the cultures of the children and the circumstances under which they find themselves. Cazden and John have summarized and codified much of the research (1968). For example, there is a popular view that Indian children are passive sitters in classrooms; yet in Rough Rock, where the children feel more at home, they are far from passive. And although educators are generally receptive to these studies, they are seldom able to alter their long ingrained approaches toward the education of their minority children.

Summary

In this paper I have attempted to summarize the state of the field of educational anthropology, as it relates to studies of educational institutions and processes. I believe that the next few years will see a growth of studies in all of the areas I have outlined--ethnographic studies of schools as micro-societies, ethnographic studies of lower-class urban and rural minorities, including their language and cognitive styles, and the interaction of these groups with

the educational institutions which purport to serve them. As with so much of educational research, I am afraid that the studies will continue to operate parallel to, rather than become directly involved in, educational change.

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